



State of Wisconsin GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 27, 2015

DNR South-Central Service Center
3911 Fish Hatchery Rd.
Fitchburg, WI 53711
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

State Trails Council Members present:

Randy Harden, ATV/UTV representative (member of *Wisconsin ATV-UTV Association*)
Leif Hubbard, *Wisconsin Department of Transportation* [non-voting]
Doug Johnson, snowmobiling representative (member of *Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs*)
Mike McFadzen, cross-country skiing representative (member of *WI Nordic Network, Northern Kettle Moraine Nordic Ski Club*)
Bryan Much, off-highway motorcycle representative (member of *Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association*) [STC Chair]
Ken Neitzke, hiking representative (member of *Ice Age Trail Alliance*)
Luana Schneider, 4-wheel drive vehicles representative (member of *Wisconsin 4-Wheel Drive Association*) [STC Secretary]
John Siegert, off-road bicycling representative (member of *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin*) [STC Vice Chair]
Jim White, boards and small wheels representative

State Trails Council Members not in attendance

Skip Maletzke, tourism/business representative [non-voting]
Phil Johnsrud, non-motorized water trails representative
Robbie Webber, bicycling representative (member of *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin*)

Invited speakers

Chris Diller; (*Department of Military Affairs*)
Stephen Swazee; (*SharedGeo*)
Howard Veregine; (*Wisconsin State Cartographer*)

Others present

Kricket Jewett; (*Wisconsin Horse Council*)
Hank Wozniel; (*Wisconsin ATV-UTV Association*)
Alex Bub; (*Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association*)
Jack Zabrowski; (*7 Rivers Region – Outdoor Recreation Alliance*)
Judy Peterson (snowmobiling/biking)
Dave Peterson (snowmobiling/biking)
Bill Schloemer (WisDOT)
Karen McFadzen
Sarah Balgooyen
Adam Harden; (*Wisconsin ATV-UTV Association*)
Dee Finngen; (National Park Service)
Don Dittmar; (Waukesha County)

WI DNR Staff present:

Kate FitzGerald, Mike Repyak, Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Daniel Buckler, Dan Schuller



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10:00 A.M. – Welcome and introductions

- Much called the meeting to order. Members and guests introduced themselves.

10:03 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of January meeting minutes

- Much noted there had been an agenda change on April 24 due to a schedule change, but that had been sent out immediately and changed online.
- McFadzen moved to approve the minutes. Johnson seconded. Motion passed.

10:04 A.M. – Chair Report

- Much mentioned that STC members would be emailed a copy of the Wisconsin State Park System's 2015-2020 Strategic Directions document and that they could comment on it individually to the DNR. Brown said that physical copies of the document were *en route* and they would be delivered to STC members during the DNR report.
- Much solicited ideas for the November meeting location.
- Much shared a positive email exchange between he, Veregin and a member of the public to underscore the importance of timely and respectful communication.

10:07 A.M. – Updates of pending appointments and solicitation of interest in reappointments

- Brown explained that there have been staff changes in the governor's office and that she resent information for the pending appointments for the horse and tour bicycling user groups.
- Brown also encouraged the four Council members with terms expiring July 1, 2015 (Johnson, Johnsrud, Harden and Schneider) to let her know if they were interested in continuing to serve in the Council. If there are vacancies to fill, Brown requested that Much set up an ad-hoc committee to make recommendations to the Council regarding those appointments.

10:10 A.M. – Discussion of format for August meeting in northeast Wisconsin

- Riverview Town Hall in northeast Wisconsin has been confirmed as the August meeting location. There will be no cost for that location.
- Much thought it would be useful for the STC to experience a series of short (15-20 minute) presentations about some of the more remarkable actions and activities of select groups and agencies from that region that would be of interest to wide a variety of user groups and the DNR.
- Much asked Council members to give thought to who could be brought in to give those presentations.
- McFadzen said that he will find somebody to talk about dog-powered sports. Schneider said there is an Antigo group that might be worthwhile to contact.

10:17 A.M. – Presentation and discussion of the United States National Grid

- Much introduced Stephen Swazee of SharedGeo and explained the reasons for the presentation and for bringing the invited guests – Swazee, Diller, Veregin – together.
- Swazee began his presentation by outlining the importance of emergency responsiveness and of communicating locations.
- Some of the reasons why a grid is necessary were identified. These included confusing street names, large complexes with only one address, the lack of GPS integration with some traditional locational methods and the extra difficulty in unimproved areas where street addresses do not exist.
- The U.S. National Grid works with any normal GPS unit and is a free coordinate system. It is the U.S. portion of the Military Grid Reference System.
- Swazee discussed the objectives of the project he and his company facilitated in Minnesota. These objectives included having a standardized approach to match the USNG, a format to work nationally, a



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format that would work across different sign sizes and styles and a format that would respect established sign standards.

- Swazee went over some of the difficulties of the project before settling on final designs.
- To help educate the communities in which the signs are to be located, a public brochure, a responder's pocket guide, dispatcher's guide and CAD support have been offered.
- Swazee noted the agencies, organizations and states that have adopted the USNG and discussed the momentum in some places to expand the areas where it is adopted.
- Much said that Oconto County chose to revamp their local system utilizing the USNG. Much then led the meeting through a demonstration with a hand-out showing how easy it is to pinpoint a spot with the USNG. "Right, then up" is all there is to navigate. He talked about the general human reluctance to adopt changes but that as people gain understanding of the utility of the grid, they will be much more willing to adopt it. He then spoke of the process Oconto County clubs used to inventory their trail location markings, integrate the U.S. national Grid and revamp their trail location system and signage.
- Brown said that the DNR had looked at it previously but there wasn't enough enthusiasm behind it. One of the big questions in adopting the USNG is emergency services education. She noted that it would be a large effort and a significant amount of education in user groups would be required, but that perhaps now was the right time to implement this system.
- Dave Peterson said that his group had rolled out different plans over the years, but every time had been different. He would love to see something standardized. He noted that maps are often art and that their accuracy is not often good. A grid would help alleviate some of those problems.
- Siegert said that it would be very applicable to the national mountain bike patrol.
- Biermeier said that it was a logical move for the DNR to use it, but cost is a big issue and he expressed worry about rural areas. Swazee said it works on a local level but you have to engage a lot of partners, especially emergency response organizations. Much said that adopting USNG signs did not have to be done at once and that the costs could be distributed over time and across different partners. Diller said that there shouldn't be any fear of pursuing USNG adoption alone. He also noted that adding the grid to maps does not require much extra work for any mapmakers. What should not be pursued, however, are Cartesian grids which are arbitrary and have no geospatial reference points.
- Veregin said that not every single person needs to understand the USNG, but emergency responders would have to.
- Council members noted their enthusiasm for the USNG. McFadzen appreciated the potential applications of the grid. Harden liked the sign templates. He recognized that marketing is always an issue, but that the sooner you start, the sooner it will be complete. Schneider said that she sees a lot of applicability in the USNG and likes that it works nationally. She hoped the grid could be used in each county's plat books. Neitzke said that the USNG would be a blessing for the Ice Age Trail. With potentially 1200 mile trail crossing many counties and communities with their own standards, it can get confusing without a standardized approach. White thought it was a promising initiative. He wondered if people could donate signs to state properties. Brown replied that it would have to be looked into, but that there are precedents for that.
- Veregin asked Swazee about assessments done in Minnesota to identify where signs were needed most. Swazee replied that focus areas were intersections, railroad crossings, warming huts, trailheads and common accident areas.
- Dittmar talked about the difficulty in getting a local community to change a mapping policy. The story underscored the resistance to change that this initiative would have to overcome. Dittmar said the important thing is to convince the 911 dispatchers about the utility and importance of USNG. Once they are sold on the importance of it, then the rest of the county or community will probably follow.
- Adam Harden said that as a volunteer firefighter, he thinks the USNG would be very valuable.

12:04 P.M. – Lunch



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12:30 P.M. – ATV-UTV user group orientation

- Randy Harden presented an overview of the ATV/UTV community. He discussed the history of ATVs and UTVs and showed a [video showcasing ATV riding in Wisconsin](#). He emphasized the importance of responsible fun in all riding. He then distinguished ATVs and UTVs and the legislation that governs and funds each program. There are no UTV trails in the state. Rather, some ATV trails also permit UTVs. There are around 330,000 registered ATVs and UTVs in Wisconsin. The great majority are ATVs, but UTV sales are growing at a faster rate than ATV sales.
- Harden then discussed the administration of the ATV and UTV programs. Though they are slightly different, program money via licenses and a gas tax goes into a fund which pays for administration, law enforcement, state properties and toward grants. An advisory council recommends which grant applications should receive money. Maintenance is a first priority, followed by new projects.
- Bub asked where three-wheelers can be used legally? Harden said that they are still defined as ATVs, so where regular ATVs are used, three-wheelers can be used as well.
- Harden then discussed the Trail Town program and showed the signage they have developed. He then discussed two layers of navigation they have created to help identify places to ride, park and patronize.. There are preferred routes which are designed to overlap an already established road route with the intent of helping riders navigate to or from a trailhead, service/business or parking area. Trail Town trailways are designed to overlap an already established trail system (which may include road routes) with the intent to help riders. Letters on bottom left of sign indicate which vehicles are allowed on the trailway. Letters on the bottom right indicate if it's summer use, winter use or both.

1:10 P.M. – DNR Report

- Schuller gave master planning updates. The DNR is close to completing draft alternatives for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. It looks like there will be a lot of varied trails, and the area would be relatively lightly developed. The Ho-Chunk Nation has gained title to a large portion of the area and will be an active partner in the management of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant. The plan for the Southern Kettle Moraine Waters is a little bit behind schedule and a draft will probably not become available until the fall. A number of master planning amendments are in the works. There has been a request for an expansion of the Granite Peak ski hill at Rib Mountain. The DNR is still in the data gathering stage. There may be a request by the Kohler Company for access through Kohler-Andrae State Park. They just sent an Environmental Impact Assessment to the department within the past week. The DNR will have to investigate it.
- There is a significant repair project on a dam at Willow River State Park. Little Falls Lake will experience a complete drawdown and the project is expected to take several years. There was also a drawdown at Wolf Lake at Richard Bong Recreation Area, but the lake will be refilled soon.
- Schuller then introduces the Strategic Directions document. He asked that Council members look at the document for the next meeting. Identify what are important goals, how would you implement goals and what are appropriate action steps? This is where long-term strategic ideas can be identified.
- Schuller then offered to the Council some comments on the budget that he recently had shared with the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks. The DNR does not take any position on the budget, so any concerns could be brought to legislators, but Schuller provided some updates and context to the budget discussion.
 - Schuller anticipated changes in partnerships over the next five years. Up to now, partnering has been compartmentalized and Parks wants to increase partnership opportunities. Nobody at the department has offered naming rights to Parks as an idea to raise funds. However, there are some partnerships which might be acceptable. Schuller gave an example of Coleman providing a lot of camping equipment as part of a learn to camp program. Those kinds of partnerships might be worthwhile.



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- Regardless of what changes might be coming, the core mission of the Wisconsin State Park System will continue. Public safety will be retained, maintenance will be stressed, users will be efficiently served, some services will be technologically based.
- Biermeier said that there is not much news for the roads inventory project. The project team is working on what attributes will be collected. There will be a few pilot areas around the state
- Brown described the incipient GIS trails project. WSPS is working to capture GIS data for all trails on their properties and hopefully provide best practices for others to use. There is a pilot project at Blue Mound State Park underway and one at Glacial Drumlin State Trail will be pursued at the end of May.
- Brown said that she is doing a presentation for mountain bike groups on Wednesday about liability issues. Let her know if anybody is interested in learning more about those issues.
- Brown said that public open house meetings have been set up around the state for the Bikeways project to develop a system of inter- and intra-state bikeways. Details about the open houses can be found on the Bikeways Project web page (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/trails/bikeways.html>).

1:35 P.M. – Discussion of proposed budget changes related to parks and trails

- McFadzen provided an overview of his concerns regarding the budget proposal, including the elimination of land purchases using funds from the Stewardship program for thirteen years, the elimination of GPR support for WSPS and the elimination of naturalist/educator positions from the DNR.
- Much then organized the discussion around the series of concerns identified by McFadzen as well as other budget observers.
- Much asked if anybody disagreed that fee increases for admission stickers, trail passes or camping could be a partial remedy to budget shortfalls. There was no disagreement.
- Much then introduced the topic of general purpose revenue (GPR), funds from which would be eliminated for the WSPS. Much and Biermeier provided some context with other states as well as the history of the WSPS. Much asked if anybody disagreed that GPR should remain as part of the WSPS budget. There was no disagreement.
- Much introduced the topic of naturalist/educator positions within the DNR which are to be eliminated in the budget proposal. He asked for any comments. Neitzke commented that naturalists/educators are very important resources who are often the face of the park to the public, providing information and encouraging appreciation of natural resources. Neitzke continued that naturalists are a great value and that he would like them to remain within our parks. Much asked if anybody disagreed that naturalists/educators should remain in the WSPS. There was no disagreement.
- Much introduced the issue of stewardship funds being frozen for 13 years. Neitzke said that it would stall trail development. Harden expressed concern that the proposal to cease purchases for thirteen years was such a drastic and immediate cut – that it wasn't just a reduction in the purchases, but an end to them for 13 years. Siegert echoed Neitzke, saying that the proposal would have the practical effect of stalling trail development for 13+ years, especially considering how hard it might be to restart the program. McFadzen asked how much money was available in the last year through Stewardship. The reply was that it was about \$640 million in total. McFadzen said that parcels of land come on the market and if the timeline is not met, then the opportunity to purchase those parcels might be lost forever. Multiple Council members commented on how important trail links are, and Biermeier said that trail links and inholdings were the priority acquisitions for WSPS. Much asked if anybody disagreed that the money for acquisitions through the Stewardship fund should remain. There was no disagreement.
- Much then presented the issue of commercial partnerships. He said that the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks has an important relationship with WSPS and contributes about \$500,000 to WSPS as well as many thousands of volunteer hours. Neitzke said that commercial partnerships could be done in a limited, case-by-case basis. For example, maybe a pavilion could have a corporate sponsor. McFadzen



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said that maybe we should shelve this issue, particularly because we do not want to jeopardize anything with the Friends groups who contribute \$500,000 and 187,000 hours. Schneider said any consideration of commercial partnerships should take the role of the Friends group(s) into consideration. Much asked if there was any disagreement to the statement: "we support the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks and any commercial partnerships should take the role of the Friends into consideration." There was no disagreement.

- McFadzen introduced a resolution proposal he wrote about the budget that was projected onscreen. Brown then described the statutory language regarding the advisory nature of the State Trails Council compared to the Nonmotorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council and the Off Road Vehicle Council. Much said that it was not within the Council's purview to advise the governor or the legislature. He thought that the Council could look into whether or not they needed to pursue changes to the statutes and asked McFadzen and Harden to investigate the issue and report to the Council in August. Much handed out a proposal to address potential statute change. There was then a debate as to the utility of resolutions and the purview of the Council to advise any entity outside of the DNR. Language in the proposed resolution was changed to not include reference to any entity outside of the DNR and to reflect the opinions expressed by the Council earlier in the discussion. The vote on the resolution was postponed for 20 minutes while the language was adjusted. Hubbard abstained from all discussion and voting during this session.

2:28 P.M. -- State Trails Council member reports

- *Snowmobiling.* Johnson commented that snow levels across the state were less than ideal over the past winter, though some pockets had excellent snow conditions. The Celebrate Wisconsin event was held in Hayward this year and luckily there was snow for that. It was a success, with a good crowd and legislative and agency attendees. There was an MS Snowmobile event at Lac du Flambeau this past year. In 2016, the event will be at the Potawatomi Carter Casino Hotel in January. The International Snowmobile Congress will be in Niagara Falls this June. The new Snowmobile registration and trail pass program will take effect in July. It is hoped to bring new funding to snowmobile trails.
- *Mountain Biking / Off-Road Bicycles.* Siegert reviewed a few trends and events within the mountain biking community. [Emergence of winter trail grooming techniques for fat-bike riding](#) – there's an article on the efforts of the Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA) to develop best practices for grooming trails for winter riding, including the use of snowmobiles and 2-wheel drive motorcycles, dragging customized grooming equipment. There will be a new [study to assess the environmental and social impacts of electric-assist mountain bikes](#). The International Mountain Bicycling Association and the Bicycle Products Suppliers Association are collaborating to study the effects of electric bikes, with a goal of producing objective data for management recommendations. The Great Lakes and Upper Midwest IMBA regions are collaborating for a [Great Midwest Summit](#) in Marquette, MI June 12-14. There is a full day agenda for land managers on Friday, June 12. Marquette has earned a Bronze Ride Center designation. The [High School Racing League is preparing for its 2nd fall season in Wisconsin](#). The National Interscholastic Cycling Association oversees leagues in 15 states, with girls making up 15% of ridership. Trek hosted a Wisconsin Leaders' Summit, with 225 expected racers statewide in 2015. Lastly, CAMBA, Metro (Milwaukee) Mountain Bikers and Southern Kettle Moraine chapters have all begun spring trail work.
- *Cross-Country Skiing.* McFadzen commented on the snow conditions, echoing Johnson's words. Skiing was a little bit better of a season than snowmobiling because it doesn't require as much snow. The Birkebeiner was a great success – it reached its 10,000 participant capacity pretty quickly. An American woman won the women's competition, and three American men finished in their top ten. The top Wisconsin skier finished 18th. The International Paralympic World Championships was



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tremendously successful in Cable. McFadzen then commented on a master planning process in Burnett and Polk counties, they are looking to make amendments on the Gandy Dancer State Trail. He asked Brown if the DNR has to specifically approve anything that the county boards pass regarding trail usages. Brown responded that the DNR has given the authority to allow special events to the local trail managers [the counties] and that the DNR is to be involved in changes to trail plans, but does not exercise authority over approving those changes. The DNR got involved in the Gandy Dancer issue previously because they were asked to by the county, and the DNR said that if the counties want to do this, they should follow basically the same process as the DNR, which includes public input. The local authority (county) should then make the final decision. McFadzen and Brown then confirmed that for those situations in which the management authority had been delegated to a county, the DNR does *not* provide approval for special events. Brown said that the local trail cooperators determine what types of uses are allowed, but in accordance with the memorandum of understanding that all sides sign. Local cooperators have to follow a public process to determine what those trail uses are. The county cannot just say they're doing X or Y with no public input. Lastly, McFadzen highlighted a Kewaskum school program which has brought a lot of kids out onto the snow and has been a tremendous success.

- *Equestrian.* Jewett has not been formally appointed as the equestrian candidate, but Much called on her to provide an update on equestrian issues. She said they just finished up the Horse Fair. They had a record attendance of 61,000 over three days at the Alliant Energy Center. She said that the DNR looked like they sold a lot of park admission stickers and state trail passes at the Horse Fair. For next year's event, a lot of people would like more information on trails, so they're hoping to provide that. She said that last year they transitioned from their printed trail guide to [Trailmeister](#). People were slow to adopt it, but there is momentum behind it now. For the past nine years they have hosted a trail building class. This year they decided not to host it, but now they have eight or nine people interested, so they might try to host it again. There's a new organization near Governor Dodge that is supplementing the Friends group there.
- *Off-Highway Motorcycles.* Much reported that the ice riding season is over and dirt paths are opening up. He had made presentations on dual sport and adventure motorcycling in three counties, the most recent of which was in Vilas County where an ad hoc trails committee is now in place to facilitate discussions between user groups. Eleven off-highway motorcyclists were just put through trail patrol training that the ATV community manages. Much thanked the ATV community for the training and said that the OHM community is dedicated to self-policing and things like courtesy sound checks. Off-highway motorcyclists rehabilitated about six miles of single track motorcycle trail in Clark County that is now open for use, with another 12 miles of trail to go. Much then remarked that there are a few recent articles on adventure and dual sport motorcycling, including [one in the Journal-Sentinel](#) and one that [he wrote for Pure Michigan](#). He emphasized that these kinds of articles are important in educating people about recreational interests.
- *4-Wheel Drive Vehicles.* Schneider reported that it has been a busy April. The Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association (WOHVA) had their meeting April 11 and the Wisconsin Four Wheel Drive Association (W4WDA) had their meeting April 18, both of which had workshops and conventions. There is a new president of WOHVA: John Lewins. There has been a push for the two associations to work more closely together. United Four Wheel Drive Association is now doing webinars rather than face to face meetings. A Wheels to Heal event is being put on by WOHVA and W4WDA for disabled veterans (physical or emotional) on August 1. WOHVA has its Great Northern Trail Ride in August and Jeep Jamboree in July. Schneider gets inquiries for 4WD trail riding all of the time and she noted that there isn't any information on the DNR website, and very little on any official site of counties and local communities. Schneider also mentioned that organizational membership is diluted because people on social media meet up in small groups, but it's frustrating because it reduces strength of



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people working together and it eliminates any control. Lastly, she said that the Four Wheel Drive person spearheading the four wheel drive vehicle legislation has stepped down which has stalled that process.

- *Hiking/Walking.* The Ice Age Trail Alliance had their annual conference in April. In their report for 2014, they noted that they had 2,700 volunteers giving 78,354 volunteer hours, accounting for \$1.7 million worth of volunteer time. Neitzke commented that younger generations are seeking out trail experiences and that is hopeful for trail maintenance and development in the future. He mentioned that the Ice Age Trail does rely on stewardship funds. Since 2000 Stewardship funds were used to protect 85 miles of trail. There are currently 675 miles of off-road trail out of an eventual 1,200 (estimated), and most of the remaining trail is on private land. In 2014, the Ice Age Trail Alliance became an accredited land trust which permits them to secure more private funds. Both the IATA and the North Country Trail Association has been active in contacting legislators regarding the budget.
- *Boards/Small Wheels.* White commented that he was approached by a few organizations that were interested in helping out on the Glacial Drumlin State Trail. He was pleased to forward information to them about the different volunteer opportunities available for trails and the wider WSPS, which are listed on the [DNR website](#). White further elaborated on the kinds of constituencies interested in volunteering on trails – some of which could be promotional for the organization or some of which could be developmental or to provide some civic outlet for people.

2:52 P.M. – Public comment

- There was a comment praising the presentation on the USNG.

2:53 P.M. – Identify future agenda items

- Mini-briefs for trail user groups in NE Wisconsin
- Report by Harden and McFadzen on potentially advocating statute change
- Foregoing user group orientations until November
- Road inventory update
- Strategic Directions comments
- Brown asked the Council members what they would like to see the DNR working on in coming years, particularly when it comes to policy. Much said that might become a part of the DNR Report in which the Council asks what issues the DNR could bring to them.

2:58 P.M. – Discussion of budget resolution

- The Council reviewed the language for the budget resolution and made a few additional edits.
- McFadzen made a motion to approve the resolution as changed. Seconded by Siegert. The motion passed 7-1, opposed by Harden. However, Harden was objecting to the concept and appropriateness of a resolution, not the actual content within the resolution. The resolution will be sent out to the Council members and posted on the STC website.

3:02 P.M. – Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn by McFadzen. Seconded by Johnson. Meeting adjourned.